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January 1, 2012

To: Regional Managers  
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director  
Melissa Norman, Deputy Director of Practice Support  
David Judkins, Deputy Director of Field Operations  
Department of Child Services

Subject: Determining and Reviewing Categories of Supervision  
DCS-11-12

The Department of Child Services (DCS) protects children from abuse and neglect by partnering with stakeholders, such as foster parents to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes. DCS values the commitment foster parents show by meeting the immediate and long term needs of the children under the care and supervision of the DCS. Beginning on January 1, 2012, DCS will be implementing new foster care per diem rates; per diems will be based on a child's age and category of supervision. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment will play a critical role in decision making regarding the category of placement recommended for a child once a decision has been made to place.

The per diem rates are based on age groups 0 to 4 years old; 5 to 13 years old and 14 to 18 years old. The categories of supervision align closely with the placement recommendations generated by the CANS assessment explained in the table below.

CANS Recommendations	Foster Care Category of Supervision
1-Foster Care	Foster Care
2-Foster Care with Services	Foster Care with Services
3-Therapeutic	Therapeutic Foster Care
4 or higher-Group home and Residential Care	Therapeutic Plus

As required by the CANS policy 4.32, the CANS is required either prior to placement or within five (5) days of placement. If a child is placed prior to completion of the CANS, DCS will pay the rate associated with the "foster care" category listed above. If the CANS is completed after placement, the rate can be adjusted if a higher category of supervision is needed. Any adjusted per diem rate due to the new information after completing CANS assessment is effective on the



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sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) day of placement. The department may, in exceptional circumstances, pay a higher category of supervision per diem at the time of placement and before completion of the CANS. In considering whether to approve a greater payment, the department shall consider the child's specific, previously identified needs for enhanced supervision and any input from the parties involved in the child's case.

The department may, after thoroughly assessing the child's needs, determine that the category of supervision should be higher or lower than the CANS recommendation. When this occurs, Local Office Director (LOD) approval is needed prior to finalizing the category. The LOD's decision to finalize a higher or lower category other than the CANS should be documented in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System as a contact.

As stated in DCS Policy 4.32, CANS reassessments are required every 180 days and at critical case junctures. When a CANS reassessment is completed and DCS determines a higher category of supervision, the rate will increase to match the new category of supervision. The effective date of the new rate will be the date of the CANS assessment. If DCS determines a lower category of supervision, the department will continue to pay the current rate as a stabilization rate. The department will not lower the rate until two (2) consecutive CANS assessments show the need for a lower category of supervision.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will generate an Individual Child Placement Referral (ICPR) for children placed in DCS and Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) foster homes. This replaces what is now referred to as the Individual Child Placement Agreement or ICPA. The ICPR must be generated through KidTraks. The ICPR will contain the category of supervision, rate, and other information the LCPA or foster parent needs to invoice DCS.

If a sibling group is placed, the FCM will generate an ICPR for each child. Anytime the child's category of supervision or age range changes, the FCM must complete a new ICPR.

#### Review of Category of Supervision

DCS foster parents and LCPAs have the ability to request a review of the child's category of Supervision at several points during placement. LCPAs and foster parents must utilize the [Child Placing Agency \(CPA\) and Department Managed Foster Homes Request for Review of Child's Category of Supervision](#) form to begin the review process.

DCS Foster parents/LCPA may request a review of the child's category of supervision by submitting the review form to the LOD:

1. Within the first 30 calendar days of placement;
2. Within the first 180 calendar days of placement; and
3. Not more than once every 180 calendar days thereafter.

The foster parent or LCPA may request a review of the child's category of supervision based on the following:

1. A critical case juncture;
2. The LCPA reasonably believes there is relevant, new, or changed information about the child's supervision needs that were not adequately addressed in the CANS assessment or during discussions about the type of placement prior to the placement being made; or
3. There is supervision or behavioral concerns that are not adequately addressed by the CANS assessment.



The LOD must hold a meeting to review the child's category of supervision within 14 business days of receiving the request with the DCS foster parent or LCPA. The FCM should be in attendance at this meeting. It is mandatory that a LCPA representative as well as the LCPA foster parent attend this meeting as both parties will have relevant information regarding the child's strength and needs. If the DCS foster parent and/or LCPA do not attend the meeting, the department will conduct a paper review.

Notice of the outcome of the review must be given by the department's LOD or designee, in writing, to the DCS foster parent or LCPA within five (5) business days of the meeting. The LOD or designee must use the [Notice of Decision regarding Review of Child's Category of Supervision](#) form when giving notice of the outcome of the review. The child's category of supervision, as affirmed or revised by the department's LOD or designee upon completion of the review, will be effective as of the date of the notice of the outcome of the review. It will not be retroactive. Any payments made by DCS after the effective date of a new rate will be adjusted in accordance with the final approved category of supervision for the child.

#### Practice Guidance

The FCM should gather information from people who play a significant role in the child's life including the child, the child's parents, other relatives, foster parents, service providers, including the LCPA, and other members of Child Family Team (CFT). The FCM should respond to CANS questions and rate the child's needs in the areas of behavior/emotions, risk behaviors, and functioning as well as the child's strengths. See Policy [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#) for further guidance.

When a CFT Meeting is held, the CANS results are used as a tool to plan for the child and family. The CFT can discuss the appropriate placement options for the child (if a decision has been made to place) but this is not a forum to discuss rates. The focus at the team meeting should be on the appropriate level of services and supervision for the child.

If prior to or during the meeting on the category of supervision review, the foster parent provides information that was not taken into account in the initial CANS, the FCM, supervisor and LOD should determine if a CANS reassessment is needed based on the new information. If the information provided by the foster parent was taken into account in the previous CANS, the FCM does not need to complete a new CANS. If the CANS reassessment results in a higher category of supervision, the FCM should complete a new ICPR to adjust the foster care rate and should reevaluate the behavioral health services being provided to the child.

Updates will be made to the DCS Policy Manual to reflect these changes. If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this administrative letter, please address them to the DCS policy mailbox at [DCSPolicy@dcs.in.gov](mailto:DCSPolicy@dcs.in.gov).

Sincerely,  
John P. Ryan, Director  
Department of Child Services

